



Hunger Action Week
St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room
Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer
7 a.m.
Monday, September 12, 2011

Good morning, everyone.

It's truly an honor to be here this morning -- to see the wonderful work of St. Vincent de Paul -- those who are blessed by their gifts -- and its volunteers.

I'd like to thank Jerry Colangelo for his great leadership in our state and acknowledge how much he has personally done over the years to help combat hunger in our community.

I know we're starting Hunger Action Week this week -- a joint effort among various Arizona food banks -- that addresses the needs in our neighborhoods -- and embraces as many people as possible to engage in the fight against hunger in our communities.

The work of St. Vincent de Paul under the leadership of Joe Riley and Steve Zabalski is a LIGHT OF SERVICE that shines throughout the community to those in need -- serving more than 3,000 meals a day -- 365 days a year.

This room is St. Vincent's largest dining room, serving more than 1,000 meals each day -- and St. Vincent volunteers deliver more than 250,000 food boxes each year to needy individuals and their families all throughout Arizona.

The message delivered with these meals is ... "Never Give Up."

No matter how difficult the time in our lives -- never be afraid to seek God's help.

I was born in Hollywood. It probably sounds less flaky to say "Los Angeles"-- but -- to be perfectly honest -- it WAS Hollywood.

My family was living on a Navy Base in Hawthorne, Nevada – the largest ammunition Navy base in the world, but my mother didn't want her child born there, so she moved to California to live with her sister, and moved back to Nevada, where I lived until I was ten.

But, my father had severe health problems -- from working in the ammunition depot -- so we moved back to California.

His condition got worse -- and he died when I was 11.

I know what it is like to be a single mom, struggling to make ends meet, while caring for your family.

I saw my mother do it.

She bought a small dress shop, and I worked in that store until the time she sold it when I was 20 years old.

It was, really, a classroom for me – where I learned the importance of hard work, responsibility, honesty and integrity.

I also learned the customer – the public – is always right.

I got a degree from Valley College in radiological technology, and, as a licensed certified radiological technician, went to work in the LA County hospital.

That was really the beginning of my career path which has had many twists and turns.

I worked as an office administrator. I worked in a drive-in, because I could make change after counting up the popcorn, coke, etc.
I worked in a Kinney Shoe store, a Jewelry store, and a doctor's office – all at the same time.

I faced difficult times, but I never gave up.

I believed in the power of prayer, then.

And, I still do.

One of my favorite stories after World War II is about a group of young German students who volunteered to help rebuild a cathedral in England that had been damaged by German bombings.

As the work continued, a debate broke out about how best to restore a large statue of Jesus -- with His arms outstretched. Careful patching repaired all of the

damage to the statue -- except for Christ's hands, which had been totally destroyed by bomb fragments.

Should they attempt the delicate task of reshaping those hands?

Finally, the young workers reached a decision -- that still stands today.

The statue of Jesus ... has no hands.

A simple inscription nearby reads: "Christ Has No Hands ... BUT OURS."

Isn't that really our commitment and calling to each other? To be His hands here on earth? I think it is.

The people of St. Vincent de Paul ARE His hands. WE are His hands.

So, especially this week, I'm asking Arizonans to remember their neighbors in need -- by supporting your local food banks and pantries -- collecting food -- volunteering your time -- providing financial resources.

Our hands CAN make a difference.

Let's ensure that difference is made during Hunger Action week.

Thank you to Jimmy Walker -- a wonderful St. Vincent de Paul volunteer who coordinates these "Never Give Up" programs on Monday mornings -- thanks to Russ Dickey, who coordinated this morning's activities to kick off "Hunger Awareness Week" -- thanks to ALL of the Food Banks working tirelessly to serve those in need -- to Jerry Colangelo -- and, finally, thanks to all of you here today for your love and kindness and support -- and for the fact that YOU NEVER GIVE UP.

Thank you.